



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** July 13, 2010

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Fire Prevention Division, Fire Department

**SUBJECT:** Receipt Of Community Fuels Hazard Reduction Grant

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- A. Authorize the receipt of grant funds totaling \$228,000 from the U.S. Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council Clearing House; and
- B. Increase appropriations and estimated revenues for Fiscal Year 2011 by \$228,000 in the Miscellaneous Grants Fund for use in the Santa Barbara 2010 Community Fuels Hazard Reduction Project, using established City contract procedures.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Santa Barbara has a long history of extreme fire behavior, most recently with the Tea and Jesusita fires of 2008-2009. In 2004, City Council adopted the Wildland Fire Plan, a comprehensive outline for mitigating threats posed by wildfire. In 2006, Council took steps to insure that specific aspects of the plan would be funded into the future by creating the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District (WFSAD). The WFSAD was approved by the property owners within the District in accordance with the provisions of Article XIII D of the California Constitution. The District is renewed by the Council annually, and most recently on May 25, 2010.

As part of the Wildland Fire Plan, the Fire Department established Vegetation Management as one of the goals to reduce the hazard (Wildland Fire Plan Section 2.6, page 20). Vegetation Management can be described as selective fuel reduction in areas, other than defensible space near structures, that are open and brush-covered. The land is typically privately owned and requires a high degree of community involvement to accomplish fuel reduction goals. Specific vegetation management areas, or units, were described in the plan. These areas were identified due to the potential for extreme fire behavior and accompanying threats to life and property. Four of the target areas described are Mountain Drive / Las Tunas, Eucalyptus Hill, Westmont and Hillcrest Road. These four target areas were largely unburned in both the Tea and Jesusita fires and were scheduled for completion within the next three years, using a combination of General Fund money and WFSAD funds.

In February 2010, the Fire Department applied for the Santa Barbara 2010 Community Fuels Hazard Reduction Project to assist in funding the effort to complete the units and provide public education to the residents. The project described in the grant is a collaborative effort between the City and the residents of the high fire hazard area. The project consists of three community outreach programs, providing defensible space instruction and chipping services, and completion of 46 acres of vegetation management outside of the property owner's required defensible space. In addition to education, the project will outline a program for ongoing maintenance of the areas treated. The goal of the project is to reduce the fuel by 1/2 to 2/3 in a modified shaded fuel break. The programs will be undertaken solely within the boundaries of the WFSAD and the funds will be used only for purposes for which the WFSAD was imposed.

On June 15, 2010 the Fire Department was notified that the City would be awarded the grant, with matching funds provided by established wildland programs in both the General Fund and WFSAD. The grant money will help complete this established project in a timely and cost effective manner.

#### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The grant consists of \$228,000 to be received into the Miscellaneous Grants Fund, Fire Department, for use in the described projects. Fire Department matching funds will total \$75,200 and will consist of employee time (\$68,000), supplies (\$1,500) and contractual services (\$5,700). Those contributions will come from budgeted costs in both the General Fund and the WFSAD. Matching funds from the WFSAD will be used only on projects for which the WFSAD was imposed and only for projects within the boundaries of the WFSAD.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

The Fire Department provides chipping services to homeowners involved in vegetation management. We have had a high degree of success recycling the chipped material for use as landscaping and mulch. In similar efforts over 90% of chipped material has been reused.

**PREPARED BY:** Joe Poiré, Fire Marshal

**SUBMITTED BY:** Andrew DiMizio, Fire Chief

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office